

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Mail Stop 0150  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to urge the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide details on the process and documentation that is needed for Venezuelan nationals living in the United States to apply for the benefits available to them through Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), particularly for employment authorization.

As you are aware, after four years of inaction and 16 hours before leaving office, former-President Trump issued a last minute memorandum on January 19, 2021, , that extended DED to Venezuelan nationals residing in the U.S. Individuals who satisfy the requirements are temporarily protected from deportation to Venezuela, and are granted the opportunity to seek work authorization in the United States.

We know that you agree that the current political, economic, and humanitarian situation in Venezuela requires that Venezuelan nationals residing in the United States be protected from the threat of deportation. However, in order for DED to be effective, U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) must prescribe the procedures through which Venezuelan nationals can apply for work authorization. Our Venezuelan constituents protected under DED require additional guidance from USCIS in order to have confidence that they can enjoy the full benefits afforded to them by DED and comfortably earn a living in the United States. Venezuelan nationals have also been frequent targets of scams that result in them paying application fees for a process that does not exist.

Furthermore, although Venezuelan nationals in the U.S. require further guidance related to their current DED status, we believe that TPS (Temporary Protected Status) designation for Venezuelan nationals in the U.S. offers the best protection to shield the community from deportation. TPS is legal protection that is based in statute, instead of being subject to a President's whims. TPS provides stability and demonstrates respect and understanding to the Venezuelan community. We appreciate your commitment to making TPS a reality and have been encouraged by our conversations with you on this topic.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to help Venezuelans seeking relief from the brutal Maduro regime through DED in the short term and TPS in the not too distant future.

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas

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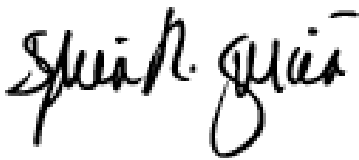
Sincerely,



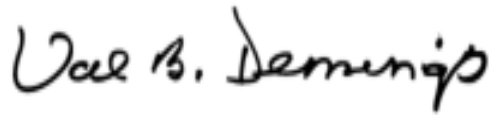
Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia  
Member of Congress



Val Demings  
Member of Congress